



California Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans News

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NEWS FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

GOV. SCHWARZENEGGER SIGNS BILLS TO BENEFIT VETERANS, MILITARY PERSONNEL IN CALIFORNIA

Governor Schwarzenegger today announced that he has signed legislation that will benefit California veterans, military personnel and their families.

"Our brave men and women in the military and our veterans are incredible and we owe them our deepest gratitude for taking extraordinary risks and making tremendous sacrifices in defense of freedom and democracy," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "This legislation will provide important benefits for California's veterans and military personnel."

Specifically, Gov. Schwarzenegger signed the following bills:

[Assembly Bill 2884](#) by Assemblymember Baca (D- Rialto) makes the California Military & Veterans Code consistent with federal law with respect to health care coverage for members of the United States Military Reserve and National Guard who are called to active duty. Under current federal law, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act requires employers to reinstate health plan coverage for employees or a dependent that was terminated by reason of service in the uniformed service without any exclusions or waiting periods.

[Assembly Bill 2844](#) by Assembly member Nation (D-San Rafael) establishes the California Veterans Mental Health Services Act of 2006 and makes changes relating to the provision of mental health services to California veterans. The legislation requires counties to provide mental health services to California veterans in need of services who meet the eligibility requirements. Among other things, the bill also requires counties to consider contracting with community-based veterans' service agencies, where possible, to provide high quality, veteran specific-mental health services.

[Assembly Bill 2433](#) by Assembly member Negrete McLeod (D-Chino) appropriates \$99,000 from the General Fund to the Military Department for fiscal year (FY) 2006-07 to provide upgraded armory facilities and access at specified battalion headquarters armory locations to support the creation of Family Resource Centers.

[Senate Bill 1244](#) by Senator Soto (D-Pomona) authorizes an annual \$125 uniform and travel allowance for State Military Reserve volunteers and appropriates \$75,000 from the General Fund to the Military Department for the purpose of providing these allowances.

[Assembly Bill 2102](#) by Assembly member Saldana (D-San Diego) requires the Department of Education to establish a formal liaison with the US Department of Defense, and authorizes school districts and county offices of education that enroll military dependents to establish transfer procedures and resolve school transfer related issues for students of military personnel assigned to duty in California. This bill helps provide school-age military dependents who are highly mobile with assistance in transitioning from one school to another and consistency in their course credits.

[Assembly Bill 2085](#) by Assembly member Parra (D-Hanford) modifies two eligibility requirements for receiving aid from the California Military Family Relief Fund (CMFRF). The changes include: A recipient has to be called to active duty for at least 60 consecutive days, not the current 100 consecutive days; and the recipient's salary or the household income of the recipient's family has to be decreased by 10% or more, rather than 30%. This bill increases the pool of qualified applicants of the CMFRF and thereby benefits more California National Guard families in need.

This month, Governor Schwarzenegger also [signed legislation](#) that supports veterans by helping the disabled with transportation, authorizing special road signs and Veteran's Day celebrations, and preventing the abuse of veterans' benefits by expanding the list of veterans' organizations for which it is a crime for a person to falsely associate with in order to make solicitations or gain benefits. He also signed [AB 3035](#), which provides a funding mechanism to build a veterans' cemetery at Fort Ord in Monterey County.

There are 2.3 million veterans living in California, which is home to more veterans than anywhere in the United States. Governor Schwarzenegger has been a strong advocate for California's veterans, consistently promoting policies that support military personnel and recognizing their valuable contributions to California and the nation, including:

- Leading an effort to advance funding for five new state veterans' homes to be built in the next seven years in California to provide a place for veterans to receive assisted living, skilled nursing care and specialized attention in a new Alzheimer's unit.
- Signing legislation that extends job security for state workers who serve in the military, increases opportunities for businesses operated by disabled veterans, protects service members from financial scams, makes it a crime to impersonate a veteran, and increases the limits on CalVet home loans to 125 percent of the Fannie Mae limit.
- Leading an effort during last year's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) proceedings that united local officials and California's Congressional delegation to ensure that the state retained all of its major installations.
- Creating a new position within his office, the Advisor for Military Affairs (AMA), which will help coordinate and develop policy impacting California's relationship with the U.S. Military, including personnel and their families.
- Creating the Governor's Advisory Council on Military Affairs, which works with the AMA to help develop partnerships and programs to serve California's men and women in the military. The Council consists of the Governor, the Adjutant General of the California National Guard and representatives from the U.S. Marines, Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

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Note to editors: This News for Veterans and previous CDVA news for veterans, news releases, and advisories are available on our website at www.cdva.ca.gov and via e-mail from jaime.arteaga@cdva.ca.gov.